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Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY KINSHASA IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 225065

EXDIS FOR AMBASSADOR VANCE

FOL REPEAT OF LISBON 5542 TO SECSTATE INFO LUANDA SEP 19

QTE:
C O N F I D E N T I A L LISBON 5542

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS-4
TAGS: PFOR, PINT, PO
SUBJECT: GOP POLICY IN LUANDA

1. FOLLOWING A CALL BY SENATOR MCGOVERN ON PRESIDENT COSTA GOMES I REMAINED BEHIND AND SPENT 15 MINUTES ALONE WITH THE PRESIDENT TO DISCUSS ANGOLA.

2. TOLD HIM USG WAS BECOMING INCREASINGLY CONCERNED ABOUT EVOLUTION OF EVENTS IN ANGOLA. UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES WOULD WE TOLERATE A COMMUNIST TAKEOVER THERE. WHILE THE OFFICIAL GOP POLICY WAS ONE OF NEUTRALITY WE HAD INFORMATION THAT THAT POLICY WAS NOT BEING OBSERVED ON THE GROUND. FOR EXAMPLE SOVIET ARMS CONTINUED TO ARRIVE IN ANGOLA IN LARGE QUANTITIES. THE GOP HAD SAID IT WAS GOING TO EVACUATE MPLA FORCES FROM
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LUANDA, BUT THAT HAD NOT HAPPENED. NO EFFORT HAD BEEN MADE

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TO IMPEDE THE MPLA MILITARY ADVANCES. WE KNEW OF ONE
OCCASION WHERE PORTUGUESE TROOPS HAD ACTUALLY FACILITATED
A MPLA MILITARY MANEUVER.

3. WE ALSO KNEW THAT PRESSURE WAS BEING APPLIED TO SAVIMBI
TO GET HIM TO JOIN WITH MPLA. THE US COULD NOT ACCEPT A
SOLUTION WHERE ANGOLA WAS TURNED OVER TO THE ONTROL OF A
GROUP, THE MPLA, WHICH HAD ACHIEVED HEGEMONY BE THE NAKED
USE OF FORCE SUPPORTED FROM ABROAD.

4. COSTA GOMES REPLIED THAT THE GOP WAS CRITICIZED ON ALL
SIDES FOR ITS ANGOLAN POLICY. MPLA ACCUSED IT OF FAVORING
FNLA. JUST RECENTLY IN BISSAU AT A MEETING OF THE WORLD
PEACE CONFERENCE THE MPLA HAD ATTACKED THE "PARTISANSHIP" OF
THE PORTUGUESE FORCES. COSTA GOMES SAID GOP HAD TRIED TO
BRING THE THREE PARTIES TOGETHER. WHEN ALVOR ACCORD BROKE
DOWN, GOP APPEALED TO NEIGHBORING AFRICAN STATES FOR HELP.
HE UNDERSTOOD THAT THE OAU NOW INTENDED TO SEND A GOODWILL
MISSION. IT WAS AS HARD TO GET THE FNLA AND THE MPLA TO SIT
TOGETHER AS IT WAS TO GET THE PCP AND PPD TOGETHER IN
LISBON, BUT GOP INTENDED TO KEEP TRYING. THEIR GOAL WAS
TO HAVE A VALID "INTERLOCUTOR" TO WHOM TO TURN OVER POWER
ON NOVEMBER 11.

5. AS FAR AS ARMS WERE CONCERNED, THESE WERE COMING IN
TO ALL THE PARTIES FROM A NUMBER OF SOURCES. UNITA HAD
RECEIVED ARMS THROUGH ZAMBIA. THE FNLA HAD RECEIVED FRENCH
EQUIPMENT AND CHINESE ARMS, AS WELL AS SUPPORT FROM ZAIRE.
THE PORTUGUESE FORCES WERE ESSENTIALLY LOCATED AT FIVE POINTS:
CABINDA, LUANDA, NOVA LISBOA, LOOITO AND SA DE BANDEIRA.
THEY HAD VERY LITTLE CAPACITY TO RESTRICT THE ARMS FLOW OR
IMPEDE MILITARY MOVEMENTS. SOME PROGRESS HAD BEEN MADE IN
NEGOTIATING MPLA TROOPS OUT OF LUANDA.

6. I SAID I HAD TO CLARIFY TO MY GOVERNMENT EXACTLY WHAT
GOP POLICY WAS. WERE THEY NEUTRAL OR WERE THEY FAVORING
MPLA. COSTA GOMES SAID THEIR POLICY WAS ONE OF NEUTRALITY,
BUT MPLA ENJOYED GREATER POPULAR SUPPORT THAN FNLA ALTHOUGH
LATTER HAD SUPERIOR MILITARY CAPACITY. HE POINTED OUT THAT
FNLA HAD HAD MODERN EQUIPMENT AT THE BATTLE OF CAXITO. WHEN
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I ASKED WHY THEY LIST, HE SAID BECAUSE MPLA FORCES HAVE A BETTER
SPIRIT AND MORE POPULAR SUPPORT.

7. I SAID THAT THAT WAS NOT EXACTLY WASHINGTON'S UNDERSTANDING
OF THE RESPECTIVE SUPPORT AND MILITARY CAPACITY OF THESE TWO
GROUPS, BUT THAT WAS NOT THE ESSENTIAL POINT. DID PORTUGAL
INTEND TO CONTINUE TO ALLOW THE MPLA TO EXPAND WITH THE
INTENTION OF TURNING ANGOLA OVER TO IT ON NOVEMBER 11? COSTA

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GOMES CLAIMED MPLA WAS NOT COMMUNIST -- IT WOULD BE LIKE FRELIMO, PERHAPS, BUT THAT IN ANY EVENT GOP POLICY WAS TO CONTINUE TO TRY TO WORK WITH THE THREE GROUPS WITHOUT SHOWING FAVORITISM TO ANY. COSTA GOMES POINTED TO YESTERDAY'S (SEPTEMBER 18) INTERVIEW BY ANGOLAN HIGH COMMISSIONER CARDOSO TO THE EFFECT THAT PORTUGAL DOES NOT FEEL IT HAS THE LEGAL RIGHT TO HAND OVER POWER ON NOVEMBER 11 ONLY TO MPLA, THAT MPLA DOES NOT PRESENTLY REPRESENT THE ANGOLAN PEOPLE AND THAT GOP WILL CONTINUE TO TRY TO UNIT THE THREE MOVEMENTS.

8. COMMENT: AS USUAL COSTA GOMES HAS ANY NUMBER OF REASONS FOR NOT TAKING A STRONG STAND, I.E., GOP IS ACCUSED OF PARTISANSHIP BY BOTH SIDES, (THEREFORE IT MUST BE NEUTRAL), ITS MILITARY CAPABILITY IS LIMITED AND MPLA ISN'T REALLY SO BAD. WHILE I DOUBT GOP COULD DO ANYTHING SIGNIFICANT TO ALTER MILITARY SITUATION IF IT WANTED TO, OUR DEMARCHE MAY HAVE AN EFFECT ON THE KIND OF POLITICAL SOLUTION THE GOP ESPOUSES. COSTA GOMES HAS AT LEAST BEEN PUT ON NOTICE REGARDING OUR STRONG VIEWS.
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